

U.S. Policy Shift Toward Spain Urged

By Mary Hernaday

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New York — Two Spanish exile leaders, here to feel out the Kennedy administration's attitude toward Spanish "liberation," have reported "sympathy, nothing more."

But Ramon Agesta, representative in Paris of the STV

(Basque Catholic Union) and Pascual Tomas, general secretary of the UGT (General Workers Union) in exile, said after a visit to Washington they are hopeful that some Roman Catholic forces and labor leaders may still prevail upon the administration to tip its moral and material aid program against Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

Both Señor Agesta and Señor Tomas claim a large clandestine following among Spanish workers opposed to the Franco totalitarian labor movement.

The visitors said they made their plea for a change in United States policy toward Spain personally to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., adviser to President Kennedy. They told him that not only is all resistance against General Franco now being felt simultaneously against the United States but they said that never have Spanish workers been so poor or fled the country in such numbers.

Imprisonments Charged

The two exile leaders said there can be a change of government in Spain without violence.

They said they could produce evidence of the imprisonment of 500 of their followers by the Franco regime, claiming that some of these have been confined since General Franco took over in 1939. Many of their followers, they reported, are listening secretly to Communist radio broadcasts from Radio Prague because it is the only way they can hear criticism of General Franco.

Confidential to the visit, George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, issued a statement pointing out that the two democratic workers' internationals, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, have joined forces in the fight against the Franco dictatorship.

"Although freedom has been long absent from Spain, there are now growing indications of a profound stirring and unrest among the people," Mr. Meany said.

"The winds of change which

have swept over other areas of the world are also manifesting themselves here. Unrest, intensified by the worsening economic condition of the people, has been countered unmercifully by the police, but it continues to grow. An explosion of massive proportions may not be far off."

Backgrounds Traced

The two exile labor leaders traveled to the United States from Paris under auspices of the two international free trade union organizations.

Mr. Tomas was general secretary of the Metal Workers Union, affiliated to the Union General de Trabajadores, from 1926 to 1939; he was also assistant general secretary of the UGT.

During the Spanish Republic he was a member of the Cabinet with the rank of minister; he represented his country at the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization. He was forced to flee Spain in March, 1939. Between 1939 and 1944 he was imprisoned in a German concentration camp. Since 1944 he has been general secretary of the UGT in exile in Toulouse, France.

Mr. Agesta, until he joined the Basque government in exile, was head of the Irun City Central of the Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos. When the Germans occupied France during World War II, he escaped to England, where he worked as a welder until the end of hostilities. He has represented the STV in Paris since 1950.

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